

Agency Human Resource Services

AHRS Periodical



Virginia Department of
HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

Reminder Regarding Layoff “Blue and Yellow Cards” and PMIS Transactions

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Several agencies have voiced concerns about layoff documents presented by employees exercising their preferential employment rights under [DHRM Policy 1.30, Layoff](#). In some cases, it appears that some agencies have not completed the information related to laid-off employees' role titles on yellow cards. In other cases, blue cards have not been accurately completed or signed by HR staff. Employees are completing these forms, using incorrect role titles and pay bands, making it more difficult for HR staff in hiring agencies to discern whether they must hold up recruitments to consider these employees' applications.

HR staff are obligated to complete this information prior to issuing the forms to employees impacted by layoff. In addition, agencies are reminded that, when layoff notifications are issued, the notification information must be entered in PMIS using the PSE003 transaction code (last option on the list) or PSE175 code. When this information is entered timely, we can verify an employee's status for agency inquirers.

Layoff is a difficult and, often, emotional process under the best of circumstances for impacted employees, their co-workers, managers, and HR staff. Being mindful of these simple steps in the process benefits all involved.

Statewide Pay Action Summary Report for April — June 2013

Reason	All Actions	Salary Changes	Average % Change
Agency Non-Routine	2	2	-10.04
Agency Special Rate	190	190	1.81
Change of Duties Salary	268	268	7.44
Competitive Salary Offer	36	36	13.02
Competitive Voluntary Transfer	564	423	8.83
Disciplinary Demotion	7	7	-7.51
Disciplinary Pay Action	1	1	-5.00
Downward Role Change	28	1	-11.16
End Temp Pay: Acting Status	114	114	-8.18
End Temp Pay: Additional Duties	57	57	-8.07
End Temp Pay: Special Assgnmnt	5	5	-6.82
Field Change	19	16	9.43
Internal Alignment Salary	1186	1186	5.60
Lateral Role Change	344	40	6.40
New Knowledge/Skills/Abilities	237	237	7.85
Non-Competitive Voluntry Trans	212	51	3.63
Non-Routine	200	200	7.08
Promotion	431	425	15.85
Reassignment	46	.	.
Retention Salary Increase	668	669	6.59
Temp Pay: Additional Duties	38	37	9.46
Temp Pay: Special Assignment	6	6	6.63
Temporary Pay: Acting Status	106	106	9.90
Upward Role Change	192	125	8.84
Voluntary Demotion	50	32	-14.12
Change of Duties Bonus	34	34	3.30
Internal Alignment Bonus	5	5	4.92
New Knowledge/Skills/Abilities	69	69	3.34
Recognition Award Leave Hours	16851	.	.
Recognition Award Monetary	1651	1651	0.99
Recognition Award Non-Monetary	108	108	0.22
Referral Bonus Pay Out	26	26	0.74
Retention Bonus	16	16	4.16
Retention Bonus Pay Out	5	5	5.22
Sign-On Additional Leave	11	.	.
Sign-On Advanced Leave	1	.	.
Sign-On Bonus Pay-Out	15	15	2.49
Total Actions	23799	6163	5.02

For the second quarter, there were 3,896 base salary increases averaging 8.15%; 343 base salary decreases averaging -8.69%; and 1,929 bonus actions, averaging 1.23%.

Workforce Planning and the Periodical's Pay Action Summary data may vary within the same reporting period based on the timing of data runs, agency retraction requests, and the manual review and extraction of erroneous PMIS entries.

This article continues our series geared toward the interests of managers and supervisors. We encourage you to share this article, tailoring it as you need to satisfy your agency's goals and culture.

Feedback Part 2—Feedback the Scientific Way

The Brain Series—Part 6



So, how should we give feedback so that the brain does not feel so threatened? What can and should a manager do?

There are several scientific approaches to help minimize the “threat” state that the brain can experience when receiving what is often referred to as “constructive” feedback. However, managers should keep in mind that these approaches or techniques are not guarantees. Remember that the brain is programmed from our very distant evolution to naturally perceive almost all inputs as threats in order to protect itself.

SCARF Model Revisited

Remember the [SCARF Model](#) (Dr. David Rock) and how even just the idea of a feedback session can send the brain into a state of fear (see the [April 2013 AHRS Periodical](#))?

Status
Certainty
Autonomy
Relatedness
Fairness

A manager can reduce threats (notice the word “reduce” vs. “eliminate”) by using an offsetting approach with the SCARF factors. What does that mean? Essentially, the offsetting approach tries to minimize a threat to one SCARF factor by positively increasing another factor. Here is an example. An employee who feels threatened by having a review with “the boss” could be offered the opportunity to make choices about when, where, or how the session may be conducted. This may increase the sense of Autonomy to offset some of the threat felt in Status.

Additionally, a manager can try to understand the reaction that might occur with each SCARF factor and try to find ways to proactively manage a potential negative reaction. For example, address Certainty by ensuring that employees know what to expect—the theory of “no surprises.” If an employee has been struggling with performance for some time, the annual review feedback session should not be the first time that the employee hears the feedback.

Showing empathy can help with Relatedness. Researchers and scientists know from conflict situations that it is important to show unconditional positive regard in these situations. In a performance review, an employee can feel threatened by feelings that the manager does not positively regard him/her. It is important to understand that in conflict situations, the parties involved do not need to like each other. However, they need to show positive regard towards each other in identifying a common goal for achievement.

Don't Tell – Ask!

A typical feedback or review session usually goes something like this:

Manager: Employee, here is your review. You did a (fill in the blank) job this past year. These are the things that you did well. And, these are the things that need to improve. Here is a list of things that you can do to improve these areas. Ok? Any questions? No – ok, thanks for your efforts.

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What do you notice about the session? Is it a little one-sided? You bet! Notice in this exaggerated example that the employee does not even get a chance to say anything. This sort of approach is very ineffective in getting the brain to absorb, accept, and even consider any changes. In fact, the brain will only begin to change patterns of behavior by being involved in the solution. Being told what to do will not usually result in long-lasting acceptance or change.

So, what should the discussion look like?

Manager: I'm glad we have a chance to look over the accomplishments over the past year. Let's start with #1. I don't want to do most of the talking so tell me what you thought of your work in this area.

Employee: Ok. I thought that on the whole I met the expectations for #1. The project went well and had few issues. The biggest issue was related to frustration with another division that made commitments but did not deliver on those commitments. So, I became a little irritated with them and was a little short in my communications with them.

Manager: I agree that the project met expectations and exceeded in some areas. I can understand the frustration issue that you experienced. As you reflect on that now, how would you change the approach if you had to do it all again?

In this version, the manager does less talking and spends most of the time asking questions. By asking the right questions, the employee will be able to draw his/her own conclusions and identify goals for the future.

Emotion Regulation

Another approach that a manager can use is called Emotion Regulation. This approach plans for how to address situations before they may happen. Below are some examples of how a manager might plan in advance to address certain situations that may arise. By planning in advance, the manager can minimize the role that extreme emotion might play in a feedback session and keep the situation on a more level base.

- Situation Selection – As a manager, you need to deliver feedback so that avoiding the entire discussion is not an option. However, you can choose when to have the discussion. You might decide that you will not have a discussion with an employee who has been having problems at home or work on a day when the employee is very emotional. Instead, you reschedule for a better day.
- Situation Modification – If, during a feedback discussion, you notice that the employee is becoming overly emotional and is having difficulty with the discussion, you may decide to end the discussion and come back to it at another time or on another day when everyone is in a better position to finish the discussion.
- Attention Deployment – If you find yourself becoming aggravated by an employee's response during a feedback session, you may decide to not respond immediately but allow the employee to speak while you write your thoughts in a notebook.
- Cognitive Change – If an employee is reacting defensively during a feedback session, you may decide to not respond in the same manner. Instead, you may pause for a moment to realize that the employee is reacting based on evolutionary brain functioning to prevent a "threat" to him/herself.

So, as a manager, there are steps that you can take to improve the feedback process. If you notice in all of the methods noted, a key factor is in planning and preparation. It is important to not only know what feedback you want to deliver but to also think about the person who will be receiving the feedback. More specifically, it is important to understand how our brains naturally react and develop some approaches to help those brains understand, accept, and initiate appropriate and necessary changes. If you can do this, you may just be able to minimize extreme emotions and create a feedback process to which you and your employees look forward.

Sources:

- Turn the 360 Around, Phil Dixon, Dr. David Rock and Dr. Kevin Ochsner, http://www.davidrock.net/files/Turn_the_360_around.pdf
- SCARF 360, <http://www.scarf360.com/about/index.shtml>
- The Brain at Work, HR Magazine, <http://www.shrm.org/Publications/hrmagazine/EditorialContent/Pages/3Fox-Your%20Brain%20on%20the%20Job.aspx>
- More than Sound Podcast with George Kohlrieser and Mirabai Bush, 5/17/2013

LinkedIn Reminder

If you have not already done so, we invite you to join the **Commonwealth of Virginia HR Connection Group** on [LinkedIn](#)! Become a member so that you too can join in discussions like “Unpaid Internships – What Do They Really Require” and “A Challenge To You – The Next Big Thing In HR (Succession Planning)”.

The purpose of the group is to allow HR staff to share information, ask questions, obtain input, and network across agencies and organizations. If you’d like to become a part of this and be able to ask questions, participate in discussions and share information, you will need to setup a profile on [LinkedIn](https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2964) <https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2964> and then request to join the group.

How do I join the Commonwealth of Virginia HR Connection LinkedIn group?

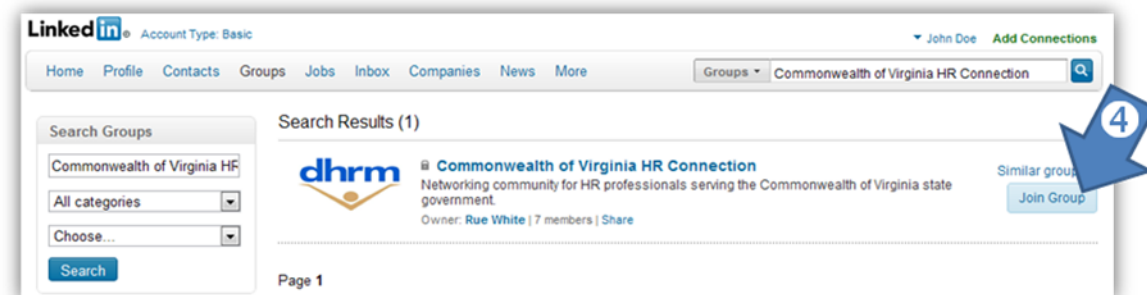
To join the LinkedIn group:

Go to www.linkedin.com and login if needed

1. Click on the “Groups” selection in the menu bar at the top of the page
2. Type *Commonwealth of Virginia HR Connection* into the Groups Search text box
3. Select the blue search button to find the group



4. On the search results page, select the Join Group button and follow the instructions



We hope you will take the opportunity to join today. If you need any assistance in joining the group, please feel free to contact Deanna Goldstein, DHRM – deanna.goldstein@dhrm.virginia.gov or Jeff Presseau, DHRM – jeff.presseau@dhrm.virginia.gov.

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